



22 November 2009

Dear Parishioners,

In his book Finding God in Unexpected Places Philip Yancey writes:

**Some in the United States judge our nation's success by such measures as gross national product, military might, and global dominance. The Kingdom of God measures such things as care for the downtrodden and love for enemies. We must not forget that Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25 presents a judgment of the *nations*. In that final reckoning, God judges nations by how they treat the poor, the sick, the hungry, the alien and the prisoner. (pp. 95-96)**

On this last Sunday of the liturgical year, we hear this parable of Jesus known as the "Last Judgment". This also is the Solemnity of Christ the King. Reflecting on this parable and its timeless challenge, I do suspect that, as a nation, we are sometimes driven more by the "gross national product, military might and global dominance" rather than by the measure Jesus lays out for us in the parable and on this Solemnity. And this can blind us to what truly measures "success" in God's eyes.

I recall a panel discussion on homelessness we had at the parish a couple of years ago. We looked at the Seattle City Council's agenda and noticed that the issue of homelessness was low on the list. It was not a priority.

And the current debate as to whether or not we ought to become more involved militarily in Afghanistan concerns me when I hear that to do so would "defend our way of life". What does that mean? Is it not overlooking the deeper issues? Is it not a form of dominance? As a nation would it not be more beneficial to involve ourselves by humanitarian means that carry out the teaching of Jesus' parable immeasurably more?

This parable shows us that we gain access to Christ and become a citizen of His Kingdom through the outreach of compassion and love. Love is the measure by which we are measured. And if we allow ourselves to be shaped and driven by such values we will make a lasting difference in our nation and within our broken, hurting world. It is this that succeeds in the end more than anything else. May His Kingdom come...

Sincerely,

*Father Tim Clark*